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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003844

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/29/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ON IRAQ, CONTINUES
OUTREACH, SEEKS LOW-PUBLICITY PKK TRILATERALS

REF: A. ANKARA 3049

[1](#)B. ANKARA 3028

Classified By: Acting DCM James R. Moore for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Turkey is "cautiously optimistic" on the future of Iraq, according to Osman Koruturk, the GOT's Special Envoy for Iraq. Turkey is continuing its outreach to political parties, and is facilitating a conference on the constitution at a Turkish mountain resort July 12-13. Koruturk claimed Turkish relations with the Iraqi Kurds were good, adding that the Kurdish leaders know independence is not viable. Turkish MFA officials believe the June 22 Brussels conference was a success. The Turks are prepared for technical expert-level PKK trilateral talks in Washington, but seek a low profile. End summary.

Outreach Continues

[1](#)2. (C) Turkey is "cautiously optimistic" on the future of Iraq, GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Osman Koruturk told the Charge during their July 1 courtesy call. Though the security situation is of concern, Koruturk said he sees progress on the political front. He evaluated Sunni outreach as the key to the process, and said Turkey will continue its outreach to all political groups as the constitutional process proceeds.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In addition, the GOT is facilitating a conference on the constitution July 12-13 near Istanbul of about 20-30 Iraqis of all backgrounds. A Turkish NGO (Center for Middle Eastern and Balkan Studies) and Iraqi NGO (Fund for Democracy and Development, headed by Ghassan Atiyyah) are co-sponsors. The Turks are inviting U.S., British, and Turkish scholars as well.

[1](#)4. (C) Koruturk reported that the June 22 Iraq Conference in Brussels was a success. MFA Deputy Director General for the Middle East Safak Gokturk echoed Koruturk, and also noted the Iraqi delegation was well-prepared: they made clear what they expected of the international community and what they would do themselves. Gokturk also believed that the conference went a long way (though not completely) to overcome the rift among those nations who supported OIF and those who did not. Gokturk thought the conference sent a strong warning to those who seek to use the Iraq war as a wedge to divide the "western allies."

Kurds Know Independence Not Viable

[1](#)5. (C) Koruturk expressed no concerns about the Kurds' role in the process; he said Turkey supported Talabani's election as President of Iraq (COMMENT: True. END COMMENT) and averred that Turkey's relations with KRG President Barzani were also good (COMMENT: We doubt it. END COMMENT.). Koruturk said Turkey is not worried about any particular Kurdish group (KDP and PUK), but does worry "about things like referenda," referring to the Jan. 30 "unofficial" referendum on independence held in the KRG. Koruturk believed that Kurdish leaders do not think that a Kurdish state is viable: "If the surrounding countries don't want good relations with them, then their life will be difficult," he said.

PKK Trilats: We're Ready, But No Reporters, Please

[1](#)6. (C) Koruturk told the Charge that Turkey was ready to proceed with technical-level PKK trilaterals in Washington. He asked that the meeting not be publicized. To do so, he argued, would create two negative consequences:

--Public interest in the PKK--especially vis-a-vis the U.S.--is so high that the press would draw attention to any lack of concrete action to cause problems in the U.S.-Turkish relationship. Koruturk recalled that at a recent briefing he held for senior journalists on Iraq, the journalists only wanted to discuss PKK and seemed uninterested in other aspects of Iraq.

--Additionally, Koruturk did not want the PKK to draw succor from reporting that would tend to confirm the view--even if false--that the U.S. is not taking action against it.

17. (C) Charge noted that S/I Amb. Jones would be prepared to discuss some non-kinetic steps we are interested in pursuing during his July 5 meeting with Koruturk in Washington. Koruturk responded that action against the PKK would improve Turkish public opinion about the U.S., which in turn would "free my government to do more" in Iraq.

18. (U) Iraq REOs minimize considered.
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